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*D<sup>r</sup> Bennett  
with D. Ogilvie's Co.*

# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

DELIVERED

AT THE OPENING OF THE MEDICAL SESSION,

IN

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BY

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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

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GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of now addressing you, from being requested by my Colleagues to deliver the Introductory Lecture, with which it has been the custom, for some years, in the Medical School of this University, to open our winter session.

As our rule has been to take this duty in rotation, and none of us may urge his personal deficiencies as a ground of exemption, I will not occupy your time in vain regrets that it has not, on this occasion, fallen to one more competent to do it justice, though I may perhaps fairly enough plead the necessity of my position in excuse of my short-comings, in discharging the trust committed to me. For I may say, with all sincerity, I consider that a duty of no light importance, which requires me to address you in the name of our venerable University, and to urge upon all placed under her tutelage, in preparation for the practice of the Medical Profession, the privileges and responsibilities of their situation; and should I fail in doing this satisfactorily, I feel that my want of success must be attributed to my inability to give due expression to my real estimate of their importance, rather than to this estimate being in itself too low. Nor is it without strong grounds that I am thus anxious to impress on all who are

preparing to enrol themselves in our ranks, the intrinsic dignity of the Medical Profession, for experience sufficiently shows that the sense of responsibility, which is the best and surest stimulus to a conscientious performance of our duty, can never be fully apprehended by the mind, which has not been made to appreciate, in some degree, the privileges which our position confers upon us.

Now those engaged in the profession of Medicine may, of course, be looked upon simply as a band of scientific students of nature, whose main object of pursuit,—the investigation of the laws of diseased action,—imperatively requires them to be acquainted also with many collateral branches of science; and even in this aspect the pursuit must be held an honourable one. But to the Christian, that higher object of our profession, its ministry in the relief of the bodily infirmities of our fellow-men, must ever commend itself as that which gives dignity and lustre to the calling. It is indeed a singular privilege of the Medical practitioner, that, without quitting the ordinary routine of his professional avocations, he is almost constantly engaged,—like his Master while on earth,—in the performance of those corporal works of mercy, those benevolent attentions to the bodily wants of his fellow-men, which make up so large a part of practical religion. True it is, that these *may* be done, and doubtless too often are done in such a mercenary spirit, as to strip them of all moral value; but, however large the deduction which we must make for this, in the present money-loving age, I cannot but feel assured that there will still remain a large residuum, which is a real labour of love, either wholly unrequited in this world, or, at all events, done quite independently of consideration of the emolument received.



I would put forward this view of the Medical profession, not only as that in which it most surely commends itself to the better feelings of our nature; but also as that, in which alone I can venture far in the way of eulogy, without the risk of raising expectations which the experience of actual practice might be far from realizing. On many accounts it is desirable that the novice in our profession,—while he cannot form too high an estimate of the nobility and responsibility of his calling,—should not be led to indulge in too sanguine expectations of the sensible fruits he may reap from his practice, or of the esteem it may secure for him from the public at large.

“There is indeed little,”—as has been truly remarked,—“in the reputation of the Physician which would be desirable to a man of ordinary ambition. It is not a profession suited to one who loves display,—who would live in the mouths of his fellow-men,—who would enjoy a widely extended name and influence. The Physician is but little known beyond his actual sphere of practice, and this must be, from the nature of the case, extremely narrow. However, he may be esteemed and even venerated *in* the community in which he resides, his worth can rarely be made known *beyond* it. No man’s services are more valued in private life, no man is more important to families and individuals as such; but he forms no part in the public apparatus of the community,—all its machinery goes on as well without him as with him. His duties are performed to individuals, and not to bodies of men. He is obliged, by a sort of physical necessity, to revolve in one single circle, and that of very small extent.”\*

\* Dr. Ware’s Introductory Lecture on the Character and Duties of a Physician, p. 5.

Cruveilhier's picture of the discouragements of a professional man's life, is yet more striking—"His life," he says, "is one of labour, self-denial, and sacrifice ; he becomes a voluntary serf, attached to the soil of the most vigorous duty ; he no longer belongs to himself, he belongs to suffering humanity. For him there are no more sweet leisure hours ; not a day that he can give up to rest, to amusement, to the enjoyment of the country, to reading, and to the arts that he may have cultivated in his youth, and of which he may still be passionately fond. He returns home exhausted with fatigue ; he is sent for again, and he cannot, he *must* not say, ' Wait till to-morrow.' The Physician is the only man whose hours of sleep are never respected. Woe to him if he refuse his aid, for then he betrays his duty."\*

If, in some passages of this extract we may detect traces of the Author's national partiality for hyperbole, still there must be admitted to be in it much substantial truth, sufficient certainly to show that the Medical life is not one to be chosen by any who are set upon a life of ease or pleasure, or who are candidates for popular applause. Nay, in some respects, the profession is *less* favourably distinguished in this, than in France and other countries of Europe, in which it has not been thought derogatory to the national honour to confer titles of nobility on medical men of conspicuous merit ; whilst, among ourselves, it is just that one of the liberal professions from which such honours are systematically withheld, with which no one of noble birth would choose to connect himself, and to which,—in one branch of the public service,—even the expression of the sense of the nation in Parliament has

\* Cruveilhier, Des Devoirs et de la Moralité du Médecin, p. 18.

hardly availed to secure that social position, admitted to be justly due.\* Undeniably, indeed, the position of a medical man is simply one of mediocrity in human esteem, whether rated by his pecuniary acquisitions, by his station in society, or by his posthumous reputation ; even the brightest luminaries of our profession, whose philosophical investigation into the laws of vital action, should place them on a par with the most illustrious names in the catalogue of men of science, being hardly known by popular report as more than *highly respectable practitioners*.†

If, then, such be the real state of matters, if there be even a substratum of truth in the remark of Hufeland, that to him who makes not the art of healing an act of religion, it is the most wearisome, the most comfortless, the most thankless science upon earth,‡ how much is it to be deplored that there should be any ground for his farther observation, that to most it is but a mere speculation, a means of making a fortune, of obtaining riches and honours, or, even with the best, a mere enquiry into nature.||

\* Fairness, however, requires an acknowledgement of the titles of Knight-hood and Baronetage, which have been conferred on many of the leading men in the profession, since the commencement of the present century.

† Address to a Medical Student, Rivingtons, London, pp. 14, 16, 22, and Appendix, where the quotations from Ware, Cruveilhier, and Hufeland, will be found at length.

‡ Enchiridion Medicum, 83.

|| Nothing, however, is farther from the writer's intention than to convey the impression that the medical life fails, in general, to give satisfaction to those engaged in it. The truth seems to be that, with all the disadvantages arising from the want of a systematic course of moral training, during their education, and it may be of misapprehensions at first, as to the prospects and responsibilities of their line of life, the conscientious performance of the duties with which medical men are conversant, has a natural tendency to foster those higher principles and feelings which afford the best solace under their discomforts and trials ; the grumbling which one occasionally meets with, generally proceeding less from those who have met with but scant share of success in the turn of their affairs, than from those whose mercenary temper has counteracted the humanising influence of their profession.

And surely there is cause also for regret, that there should be no systematic provision made in our schemes of professional education for infusing juster views into those in training for the healing art. For extensive as is our curriculum of medical study, and efficient as are,—upon the whole,—the means adopted to test the qualifications of those who are candidates for medical diplomas, all this applies simply to *professional* points, and can have no direct influence in rectifying the estimate formed by those subjected to it, of the *moral* privileges and responsibilities of their future position in life, and in preparing them for its trials.

True it is that facilities for the acquisition of religious knowledge are in this country abundantly provided for all who are willing to avail themselves of them; while, on the other hand, our multiform divisions on doctrinal points throw, in many cases, insuperable difficulties in the way of any special course of this description being included in the medical curriculum; but it is by no means so clear that there are the same difficulties in the way of our adopting some system of *moral training*, or that this is not needed. On the contrary, its absence seems to be the great deficiency in our present system of medical education. For there is another element in all education, whether moral or professional, besides the mere communication of knowledge, namely, the reduction of this knowledge to practice. In the latter case, this principle seems to be fully admitted, for we do not content ourselves with merely giving our students a description, (for instance,) of the anatomy of the human body, or explaining to them the modes of performing surgical operations, or laying before them the received views of healthy and diseased action, and the approved treatment of the latter; we should never deem this head knowledge, however extensive, to



be of itself sufficient to qualify a man for practice, and we do all we can, by compulsory regulations in some cases, and by holding out inducements and facilities in others, to ensure his carrying out with his own hand, under the eye of his teacher, a series of operations illustrative of the information conveyed in the lecture-room, and as much as possible exercising himself practically in his profession, so long as he has the advantage of having at hand an experienced instructor, to whom he can refer in all cases of doubt or difficulty.

Why then should we rest satisfied with our students obtaining, as I suppose may fairly enough be admitted to be the case, an average amount of moral instruction, without making any provision to ensure that it likewise shall be reduced to practice by some regular course of training? Or, if this be presumed, in general to be done by their parents or natural guardians, surely at least in their absence, when those entrusted with the professional education stand at the same time somewhat *in loco parentis*, on them must fall also the additional responsibility of superintending the moral training of the student, a duty however, which they cannot in any way effectively discharge, except by the adoption of some *systematic* arrangements, sanctioned by the legitimate authorities.

Of course, I do not mean to say that there is absolutely no moral training in our present system. The consciousness of the number of great and good men in our profession, among whom our countrymen hold no subordinate place, would of itself forbid the idea, for the tree is known by its fruits. The very attendance on stated hours of lecture is of itself a course of discipline of no small efficiency, if it be done with regularity, and some appropriate plan followed out for storing up in the memory the instructions received. Each branch of medical

study too, will be found, if assiduously pursued,—over and above the simple knowledge of facts and their relations thus acquired,—to contribute its own peculiar influence towards establishing that due balance of the mental powers which is so important in a moral as well as an intellectual point of view.\* Our weak point does not lie in the deficiency of opportunities of self-discipline, but in the want of any provision to ensure their being made use of. As Dr Mackness remarks, our curriculum is abundantly sufficient in extent, but its thorough effectiveness seems to be impeded by a want of control over the conduct and occupations of our students.†

In this particular, as well as in making no special provision for the accommodation and comfort of the strangers, who resort to our medical schools, the system pursued in most of them contrasts rather unfavourably with that of the English Universities, where the College tutors are expected to attend not merely to the studies of their pupils, but to the regulation of their hours, and many points of domestic arrangement, where the students are mustered daily at the College Chapel, as well as at the College table, and where rooms are provided for them either within the Colleges, or in lodging houses licensed by the University, the proprietors of which are responsible to the academical authorities.

Having no intention of coming before you as the apologist of the English Universities, I shall not stop to enquire how far the excesses in which many young men indulge during their College life, are chargeable on a remissness in carrying

\* The writer has much pleasure in referring for some valuable remarks, in illustration of the foregoing, to an Introductory Lecture delivered to the students of Humanity, by Dr. Maclure, also in Marischal College, and on the same day.

† Moral Aspects of Medical Life, p. 97

out the rules of academic discipline, or how far the blame is rather to be laid on the silly connivance of their parents, who,—as is insinuated in the report of the late Royal Commission,—care not much what irregularities may have been committed, provided only they have had the sanction of aristocratic companions, of those,—to use a simile of Mr. Ruskin's,—who stand a few elods of earth above them on the mole-hill of the world.\* My only reason for calling attention to the English Universities at all, is that in their case, we meet with a system in actual operation, whose natural tendency seems to provide the student with home comforts on the one hand, and to prevent or moderate his irregularities on the other; a system therefore, in so far apparently just what is desiderated in our Medical Schools, if only it can be adapted to their special circumstances, and sufficiently guarded against liability to abuse.

Such an impression would seem indeed to be gaining ground in the profession, to judge by the progress of the movement for providing, in connection with Medical Schools, collegiate buildings in which the students may reside under suitable regulations. Hitherto, with one or two exceptions, the movement has, I believe, been confined to the metropolis, and it was not without reason I fear that London has thus taken the lead, for there probably more than any where else in this country, were the evils crying which it was sought in this way to obviate; though wherever a medical school exists in a densely populated locality, there must be proportionate facilities afforded to the more unstable among the students for engaging in courses which can end only in their own destruction; and if we are less exposed to such evils *here*, it is probably mainly

\* Pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism.

due to the comparative smallness of our population giving to the grosser kinds of misconduct a notoriety, which they would not have in a larger town, and especially to so great a proportion of our students being natives of the place, and living in their own families, and thus placed under the influence of the best, and highest, and holiest kind of moral control.

With this it would be an ill-advised policy ever to interfere, but I would venture to submit to the consideration of all who take an interest in the prosperity of our school,—and it is a question in which the students have even a greater stake than their teachers,—whether an endeavour might not be made to improve the situation of such as come here from a distance, by rendering them assistance in the way of obtaining comfortable and respectable homes, and of protecting them from impositions to which strangers are more or less exposed; and whether steps might not be taken to make this a means of checking any such irregularities as might cause discredit to our school, or put temptations in the way of well disposed students.

I trust I may be excused, should I seem to press this question with undue warmth, being led to do so by the interest, which, in common with my colleagues, I feel in the development of the resources of our school, as well as by the consciousness that the steps, which we have in consequence been led to take, to encourage students to resort to it from other quarters, impose on us a corresponding responsibility of seeing, that those, whom we are thus the means of withdrawing from their natural guardians, are not suffered, by our neglect or supineness, to come by any mischief, moral or physical, or to encounter any unnecessary privations, which they might have escaped at home.



And some very simple arrangement might perhaps be found sufficient to meet the necessities of our case, for in the establishment of the collegiate system in all its essential points,—including both its home comforts on the one hand, and its mild but steady moral discipline on the other,—there is probably no such formidable difficulty as is supposed. No splendid building, no expensive establishment is required. It is open to any one to carry it out. Its establishment is in fact effected in so far, whenever any respectable householder receives students as inmates in his family, for in doing so, he virtually comes under an obligation to superintend their moral training, as well as to attend to their health and general comfort; and in order to give such an arrangement a strictly collegiate character for the time, there is only required an official recognition by the University, implying of course a power of inspection, and the adoption of regulations calculated to secure the rights of all the parties. Not I apprehend that any such arrangement should be made *compulsory*, or indeed that it would be in the power of the University to do so, but I should anticipate much good even from the *recommendation in an official manner*, to students from a distance, of houses, of whose fitness for the purpose the academical authorities had satisfied themselves; while the power of intimating publicly the withdrawal of this sanction, would of itself furnish a strong moral check against its abuse.

How far such a scheme is practicable, must of course be left to be decided by those who have authority to make the trial; nor does it become me to do more than respectfully submit for their consideration the great advantage which I conceive would result from any arrangement, calculated to draw closer the bonds of sympathy between the teachers and

the taught, who, as fellow-workers in a common cause, ought surely to feel, in some degree, as members of the same family or brotherhood,—the very idea, indeed, implied in our name of *College*. No one, I am satisfied, would be a greater gainer, by such a result, than the student bent on making the most of his opportunities, who, as matters stand, with every intention of doing right, is often placed at great disadvantage from mere want of experience of the world. What, for instance, is of more common occurrence, even among our best men, than to crowd so many classes into one session, that it is physically impossible for them to do justice to the greater number, the attempt only threatening the ruin of their health from excessive mental exertions? Now, in the majority of cases, this is the result merely of thoughtlessness, and would never have been done, had the precaution been taken of consulting some friend, of a few years more experience.

Nay, there are some dangers to which young men are exposed,—one might almost say,—in direct proportion as they are enthusiastic in their professional studies, as, for example, that of getting so absorbed in some favourite pursuit,—laudable in itself, or even absolutely necessary in its proper place,—but, in this instance, becoming positively injurious, by excluding other matter still more essential to the professional man's education. These are not cases for censure, but they are certainly cases for counsel, cases too in which advice must be offered,—nay obtruded upon the student, for, from the very nature of his delusion, it is the most unlikely thing possible, that he should himself ask for it; but, without some system to draw us closer together, and make the teachers more cognisant of the students' views, how is this to be brought about?

There is yet another danger to which the ardent pursuit of knowledge exposes the youthful mind, and one the more perilous, as falling in so much with the prevailing temper of the age,—the danger arising from the adoption of a materialistic, or pantheistic philosophy.

The charge of a bias to infidelity is one of old standing against our profession, and there have been times when it would appear not to have been without foundation, though whatever may have been the case in the last century, I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that, in the present day, medical men are as little amenable to such an accusation as any class of society. But, in rebutting the charge, as against our profession in particular, I feel that I cannot deny its justice, as applied to the age at large. True, the form in which it now appears is not so grossly revolting as that which flourished under the Upas Tree of the French Revolution, but it may not, on that account, be the less, but rather indeed, the more dangerous. True also, it is not so rife among us as among the continental nations, as well Protestant as Catholic, where the generality almost of men of science seem to hold such principles; yet there is only too much reason to fear that we may not remain long in their wake, considering the talent of the periodical literature, by which such views are advocated even here, and the ability and activity of many of their propagandists.

The present age is admitted, on all hands, to be one of progress, a re-action, it may be, from the lethargy of that which preceded it, and according to the temper of individual minds, this progress naturally developes into the divergent extremes of mysticism and materialism; to the latter of which students of natural science are, as experience shows, most prone.

Strange as it may at first appear that those whose occupations bring them most constantly in contact with the wonders of Divine power, should yet be the most prone to overlook the hand that works them, it is, nevertheless, a result which may be logically enough traced to the perverted operation of what would seem to be a universal law of our nature, affecting both our mental and bodily constitution, viz., the liability of impressions to lose their force on long continued or repeated application. Thus the physician accounts for the tolerance, even of active medicines, which may often be induced by their long continued administration in small doses; thus the physiologist explains our absolute indifference, after a time, to odours, and sounds, and sights, which we had deemed intolerable at first; and to this also, the moralist ascribes the hardening or besotting influence of long continued familiarity with misery or vice.

Not as though our nature were the mere sport of circumstances, for we have, each one of us, the power, if not of wholly counteracting this tendency, at least of turning it to good, instead of evil; for as certainly, as mere length of exposure to any impression takes away in many cases its pungency and pain, so does a habit of actively and intensely directing our attention to it, acquire for us an almost supernatural delicacy of perception, as we see in the amount of information the blind derive from the mere sense of touch.

Nor is it otherwise in morals; for, if repeated contact with vice and misery will harden the careless mind, it may to the practical philanthropist, who embodies his feelings in charitable acts, yield a rich return in the moral culture of his own heart. And in the same way, may we account for the diverse effect of the pursuit of science on different minds. To him

with whom the sense of the Divine Presence is an ever-abiding reality, such studies are calculated to be of high moral efficacy; but we need not wonder that where this conviction is absent, *or is not acted upon*, the phenomena of nature, when they come, by constant recurrence, no longer to produce that thrill of wonder which their first manifestation excites, should also cease to exercise their appropriate moral influence on the thoughts, in leading them up to an Almighty Creator, whose original fiat was the cause of their first existence, and whose continued volition is no less necessary to their continued subsistence. But the intelligent mind can ill abide to rest in such a state of mere negation, and passively ignore all theories of the causation of natural phenomena; it is impelled by its very constitution,—as is admitted by those who have gone farthest in the way of scepticism,\*—to assume some efficient cause for the phenomena of nature. Hence the danger,—and a danger great, just in proportion to the love of scientific speculation,—that he who has already said *in his heart* ‘There is no God,’ that is, who has neglected to retain the constant and loving sense of His continual presence, may be led to give to this practical lie, a more logical form, and adopt some modification of that pantheistic philosophy, which would explain the origin of the phenomena of nature by *deifying nature itself*; a system of error, which, as history shows, in one or other of its multiform developments, has ever had attractions for the corrupt heart of man, by flattering his self-sufficiency, removing from him the irksome feeling of a watchful eye being ever over him, and promising him the solution of many moral difficulties, whose existence the

\* As, for instance, by Owen, the Founder of Socialism. in his first article of the Religion of the “New Moral World.”



Christian must admit, though he deems it his truest wisdom to put this perplexity to the account of his own short-sighted and imperfect judgment.\*

Such is the system legitimately resulting from any philosophy, which,—whatever theory it may adopt as to so-called proximate causes,—does not recognize the constant presence of a personal Deity, as the ultimate efficient cause of all the phenomena of nature, for the human mind cannot rest in a shallow deism, which would imply that God's work was over, on creation being once accomplished, the great Author of nature being no farther concerned in the work of His hands, than the so-called maker of any piece of ordinary mechanism is with the subsequent play of its parts; forgetting that this is effected merely by taking advantage of those motive powers made ready to his hand, which, as they are not of human origin, so may well be independent in their continued action of all future care on the part of their human applicer.† Nor will the common place phraseology of *natural powers, forces, or laws*, or even of *Divine influence, Providence, &c.*, be found to have any meaning, except in so far, as it resolves

\* The ancient systems are given with considerable detail in Cudworth's *Intellectual System*.

Not the least dangerous feature of Pantheism, is that it combines in a high degree the charms of magnificence and simplicity; and while it is fundamentally opposed to Christian Truth, there is yet that sort of parallelism between them which admits in many cases of the same modes of expression, though in widely different senses;—

“Not by conversion of the GODHEAD into flesh,  
But by taking of the Manhood into GOD.”

† “It is probable that matter depends for its existence upon the constant efficacy of God's power and presence. Were He not constantly present with the whole Creation it would seem that its instant annihilation could not choose, but follow.” Wilberforce on the Incarnation, p. 32, 4th Ed.

See also Bp. Gleig's Charge, 1819, Note D. M'Cosh's *Method of Divine Government*, p. 159. Harris's *Pre-Adamite Earth*, p. 119-121, and Carpenter's *Manual of Physiology*, p. 45.

itself into an admission of the constant sustaining action of the Creator, or is a mere disguise of a line of thought tantamount to a true deification of nature.

Such being the alternative set before you in the speculations which your studies must and ought to excite, as to the causation of natural phenomena,—choose, I beseech you, my young friends, the better part, and so secure yourselves from the delusions of a false philosophy. Carry this sense of the Divine presence about with you, into all your pursuits and speculations, nor ever think so meanly of Him, in Whom “we live and move, and have our being,” as to suppose that anything is too minute to be the constant object of His attention, or any amount of work so great as to oppress Him with anxiety.

Forget not too, that the honour done to our human nature by Him who now bears it in His own person at the right hand of God, extends to the whole of that nature, *to body as well as soul*; so shall you best secure yourselves, either from any sinful dishonouring of your own bodies, or from forgetting what is due to those of your fellow creatures, however much marred by disease during life, or become the prey of corruption after death;—so shall you be proof against that levity of deportment, which, at times degenerating almost into ribaldry, was, in years, now, I trust, passed away, more revolting to the novice in practical anatomy than even the horrors of physical corruption.

And finally, in the subsequent practice of your profession, let that be your motto, which is so appositely inscribed on the bust of the great Ambrose Paré, the father of Modern Surgery, in the theatre of the Ecole de Médecine, at Paris; “*Je pansais, Dieu a guéri*,”—“I dressed the wounds, but it was God that wrought the cure.”

Yet let it not be thought, because I have ventured to put you on your guard against certain dangers to which the pursuit of science exposes us, when conducted in a wrong spirit, that I would wish at all to depreciate its value; or object to the extent to which it is now made an element of a liberal education. On the contrary, not only do I entirely sympathise with that view, which has led all our licensing boards to include more or less of such pursuits in their curricula of medical study, but I think it were most desirable that they were even more attended to than is at present the case, in the education of those in training for the other learned professions, and I find much satisfaction in the reflection, that the growing sense of their importance will, in due time, bring this about.

Only, along with this, I feel that there is something one-sided in our present system of looking so exclusively at the *physical or material* aspect of nature, as to overlook that which is *spiritual and immaterial*, and to imagine, because, from the imperfection of language, we are obliged to use figurative expressions, in regard to such matters, that the things themselves have a less real existence than those which are objects of sense; for surely it can only be from such an impression of their unreality, that we can persuade ourselves that it is compatible with a sound philosophy to ignore one of the two great elements of which the created universe consists, and so to busy our bodily eyes with the objects of sense, as to shut those of our understanding to that co-existent universe of spiritual entities, with which physical nature is everywhere, as it were, saturated. As well might the natural philosopher frame a system of physics, from which should be excluded all reference to the palpable, but all pervading agencies of heat, light, and electricity. But the crowning point of the paradox



is, to investigate,—as some would have us to do,—with the most pains-taking care, the baser and corruptible element of man's nature, in which he has so much in common with the lower animals; and at the same time, give ourselves no concern with the play of that nobler and spiritual part, by which he seems to approximate,—in so far as the finite can be said to approach the infinite,—to the uncreated essence of the Deity.

With all our boasted advances in refinement and civilisation, it can hardly be denied that our modern philosophy has very much of this one-sided character. We have been dazzled, as it were, by the rapid progress of all the physical sciences, and the concomitant improvements in what are popularly termed the useful arts, and proportionably elated by the power over material nature thus placed at our command; the power of travelling with the speed of the hurricane, and conveying our wishes to the most distant places with the rapidity of the lightning,—which, terrible as ever, amid the strife of the elements, is here reduced to the mere instrument of our pleasure;—the power of writing by the sunbeams, and of penetrating by our telescopes into depths of space, which even “the swift winged arrows of light” must require years to traverse, and by our microscopes demonstrating, in the minutest and most common of natural objects, fields of research, no less wonderful;—to say nothing of our possessing in the steam engine an instrument to whose physical power no bounds can be set, and in the printing press, one equally unlimited in its capabilities of perpetuating and diffusing the results of our investigations and labours.

But, along with all this, are we not as far as ever from the successful solution of those moral and social problems which

bear so immediately on the welfare of mankind? If the spirit of the age has powerfully fostered the growth of our great manufacturing towns, and made them chosen seats of art and science, has it not also developed there the seeds of a moral pestilence, by filling them with a population, ground down by the inexorable pressure of an overwrought competition to a state of absolute destitution, heathenised and degraded by abject poverty, by acquaintance with evil, and ignorance of all that is good? Or, to look abroad, is not the curse of slavery so rampant among our transatlantic brethren,—noted though they be for their progress in the practical application of all those scientific discoveries which are the boast of our age,—that we have seen even the finger of despotic Austria pointed at that “land of freedom,” in well merited scorn and rebuke?

Or again, to pass away from these grosser evils and deficiencies of our day, are we not under the same necessity as ever of drawing upon the sages of antiquity for our systems of ethics and metaphysics, and of recognising, as our models in their several departments, the works of the poets and artists of classical times, or of those masters of Christian art who flourished in ages when the field of physical science was as yet almost unbroken ground? And whence did these men, thus destitute of advantages on which we justly set so high a value, draw their deep knowledge of man, and their power of exerting such an imperishable influence on all succeeding generations, but from their intense contemplation of the spiritual and unseen?\*

\* It is not, of course, meant to put even the highest system of heathen ethics on a par with that of Christianity, or to question the superhuman radiance which distinguishes the productions of true Christian art from the noblest efforts of classical times. Yet the very fact of the works of these

Let us then render their due meed of praise to the great and good, and wise, of former ages, and endeavour to supply from this copious source what may be deficient in the popular systems of the day, but let us at the sametime beware of living in the past, and neglecting the present, for it is with the present, and the future as influenced by the present, that all our active duties lie; and to bury ourselves in the past is as culpable a form of absenteeism as we can well be guilty of. We are men of the nineteenth century, and be its system sound or unsound, it is with it we are concerned; where we recognize in it excellencies, let us do our best to develop them; and where we are made painfully conscious of its defects, let us not waste our time in brooding over them in sluggish melancholy, or give way to vain invectives, but set ourselves manfully to attempt their amelioration. We are,—most of us,—members of the medical profession, let us then throw ourselves wholly into its cause,—and surely it is in the main a cause fully justifying such a sacrifice;—let it ever be our endeavour by the consistency and usefulness of our conduct, whether as students or practitioners, to identify it in the public mind with the cause of humanity and general utility, and without either glossing over deficiencies at present perceptible enough amongst us, or allowing them to drive us away in disgust, let us address ourselves, each one in his proper sphere of action, to the work of their rectification.

And, as we are moreover, members of a University, venerated heathen philosophers, poets, and artists, retaining unimpaired, for so many ages, their influence over men's minds, even under the bright light of Faith, proves that they possess some strong element of truth; and this seems to consist in their realization of the existence of a spiritual world, however erroneous may be many of their speculations regarding it. For it is evident that even mythological fables assume the existence of unseen and spiritual beings, and therefore, in so far, really witness to a truth, too much overlooked by our popular scientists.

able in our eyes from the many illustrious men who have been here before us, let us, while occupying in our turn their position, take them for our models, and make the most of the advantages here offered to us; for that we have our peculiar advantages will be sufficiently evident to all impartial persons, nor is there need or propriety in my now entering more specially on their enumeration; and if we have also our deficiencies, which are, for the most part, I believe, the same as are to be found in other similar institutions,—if, in particular, we may desiderate a more efficient system of social organization,—let us, while we make all proper exertions for its attainment, in the meantime, every one of us, both teachers and students, draw as closely together and pull as much in unison as our present arrangements will allow; so shall we best supply the deficiency, and, at the same time, overcome more than half the difficulties which may be in the way of its removal.

Our duties are reciprocal, and we must meet half-way. As an inefficient teacher cannot hope to secure the respect of his pupils, so no more can the most energetic and devoted have any satisfaction in his work, unless those who enrol themselves as his students, will duly co-operate, that is, in good faith *work along with him*. For my colleagues and myself, I trust I may say that, whatever may be our capabilities,—which we leave to others to decide,—we have our hearts in our work, that we are honestly anxious to do full justice to those committed to us, and that, while in return, we look to you for the faithful fulfilment of the students' part, for a regular attendance on the several courses of lectures, and a diligent pursuit of medical science, as well as a general propriety of conduct, becoming the dignity of our University and our profession,—we shall ever desire to be made your confidants in all the

difficulties and perplexities of the student's life, and to cultivate for each of you feelings of sympathy and regard, and shall esteem it our highest satisfaction to see you meet with respect and prosperity in after life, and to share in the credit, which it is our hope and trust and earnest prayer, your professional career may reflect upon yourselves, and in a lesser degree, on all who have borne a part in the conduct of your education.





